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S/S 9514165

at 13a

United States Department of State

Under Secretary of State
for Global Affairs

95 AUG 11 P5:57 Washington, D.C. 20520-7250

August 11, 1995

RELEASED IN FULL

Dear Ms. ~~Des Forges~~:

I am writing in response to your July 27 letter regarding the arms embargo in Rwanda and the humanitarian conditions in the prison there.

As we discussed at the July 25 meeting at the White House, the United States Government has decided to support Rwanda's effort to have the Security Council lift the arms embargo against its government, subject to certain conditions. These conditions, each directly related to arms, include a prohibition on transfers of arms to third parties in the region and a requirement that arms be marked and registered. Our chief reason for supporting the lifting of the embargo is to give the Rwandan government the opportunity to defend itself against the armed extremist exiles who are threatening the peace.

You are correct when you state that the United States now has an ideal opportunity to press the Rwandan government for action on the judicial front, and we will be doing so. Between now and the vote on the arms embargo, we will take the opportunity to impress upon the Rwandan government at the highest levels the need to take immediate action to alleviate the overcrowding and poor conditions in its prisons. We will also seek to include in the preamble to the embargo resolution language that calls upon the Government of Rwanda to take immediate action to resolve the humanitarian problems in its prisons, and to expedite disposition of the charges against those detained, without making it a condition.

It was a pleasure to see you at the White House meeting. I too found the exchange to be very productive.

Sincerely yours,

Timothy E. Wirth

Alison L. Des Forges,
Human Rights Watch Africa,
New York, New York.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: HARMON E KIRBY
DATE/CASE ID: 18 MAY 2007 20010361

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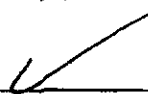
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- 2 -

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign and send the attached reply to the July 27 letter of Ms. Alison L. Des Forges of Human Rights Watch/Africa, concerning making progress on Rwandan prisons a condition of USG support for lifting the arms embargo on Rwanda.

APPROVE



DISAPPROVE

Attachments:

- Tab 1 - Proposed reply
- Tab 2 - Ms. Des Forges' letter

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Drafted:AF/C:DHefflin
8/4/95, 7-3139
SEALLAF 6421

Clearance:AF:PBushnell
AF/C:ARender
AF/FO:RBogorian
DRL:CNix(subs)
IO/UNP:GStanton(subs)
PM/SRP:KGallegos(subs)
USUN/W:SGeorge(subs)

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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/AFRICA

Formerly Africa Watch

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July 27, 1995

Mr. Timothy E. Wirth
 Undersecretary for Global Affairs
 United States Department of State
 2201 C Street N.W., room 7250
 Washington, D.C. 20520

RELEASED IN FULL

Dear Mr. Wirth,

At the July 25 NSC meeting on Burundi, you mentioned that the United States was supporting a resolution to end the arms embargo on the present government of Rwanda, subject to certain conditions. I understand that the conditions now being considered all relate to the use of the arms and the prohibition of their transfer to other governments.

The Rwandan government, anxious to have the embargo ended, clearly needs United States support for this measure. This offers the United States an ideal opportunity—one that may not be repeated in the near future—to press the Rwandan government for action on the judicial front. To do so only takes them at their word and asks them to make good on the oft-repeated promises to bring the accused to trial. Getting the judicial system moving is fundamental to breaking with the past pattern of impunity, to ensuring some internal stability, and to creating conditions that will encourage the return of the refugees.

To get the system functioning will require some action by the legislature as well as by the cabinet itself, all of which could be accomplished quickly given sufficient political will at the highest level. Some members of the Rwandan government sincerely wish to get the trials started, but they have been stymied by extremists who distrust the judges named by the previous government and who have no interest in seeing some of the accused tried and found innocent. By conditioning support for the end of the embargo on the receipt of a clear plan, with specified dates, for beginning prosecutions, the United States might strengthen the hand of those seeking judicial action against those who are blocking it.

Linking support for the end of the embargo with a guarantee of prompt judicial action would demonstrate that concerns of justice and human rights form an integral part of our foreign policy with regard to Rwanda. Given the drift to polarisation within the government and

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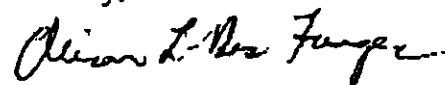
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not pass up the chance to make this point and to provide a lever to the moderates in their struggle against the extremists.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the meeting on Burundi. I found the exchange of views and information most productive.

Sincerely,



Alison L. DesForges

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